

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [HB 1509](#)

TITLE: Veterinarian Licensure by Endorsement

SPONSOR(S): Johnson

COMPANION BILL: [SB 1708](#) (Gaetz)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Industries & Professional Activities](#)

16 Y, 0 N



[Commerce](#)

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill revises the requirement for veterinarian licensure by endorsement, removing the requirement that such applicants have held a valid, active license for the three years immediately preceding their application, and instead, requiring the applicants to hold a valid, active license "in good standing" to practice veterinary medicine in another state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

Indeterminate. The bill may have a positive fiscal impact on the private sector.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill revises the provision in the veterinary medical practice ([practice act](#)) that governs [veterinary licensure](#) by [endorsement](#), by removing the requirement that the applicant's out-of-state license be held for the three years immediately preceding the [application](#) for licensure, and instead, requires the applicant's out-of-state license to be in good standing. (Section [1](#))

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section [2](#))

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

PRIVATE SECTOR:

Indeterminate. The bill may allow additional veterinarians to be eligible to practice in the state, which will increase access to veterinary care for animal owners and patients.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

[Practice of Veterinary Medicine](#)

The Board of Veterinary Medicine (Board), created within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), implements the provisions of ch. 474, F.S., relating to the practice act. The purpose of the practice act is to ensure that every veterinarian practicing in this state meets minimum requirements for safe practices to protect public health and safety.¹

¹ S. [474.201, F.S.](#)

A “veterinarian” is a health care practitioner licensed by the Board to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine in Florida.² Veterinarians are subject to disciplinary action from the Board for various violations of the practice act.³ Veterinary establishments are required to have a premises permit issued by DBPR.⁴ Veterinarian licenses are renewed every two years,⁵ however premises permits have no expiration date.

Veterinary medicine includes, with respect to animals:⁶

- Surgery;
- Acupuncture;
- Obstetrics;
- Dentistry;
- Physical therapy;
- Radiology;
- Theriogenology (reproductive medicine); and
- Other branches or specialties of veterinary medicine.

The “practice of veterinary medicine” is the diagnosis of medical conditions of animals, and the prescribing or administering of medicine and treatment to animals for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury, or disease, or holding oneself out as performing any of these functions.⁷

The practice act defines a “patient” as any animal for which the veterinarian practices veterinary medicine.⁸

The practice act defines a “veterinarian/client/patient relationship” (VCPR) as one in which a veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of an animal and its need for medical treatment.⁹

Licensure Requirements

Veterinarians are required to hold a valid, active license to practice veterinary medicine.¹⁰ Pathways to licensure include licensure by examination,¹¹ endorsement,¹² or temporary licensure.¹³ Licensure by examination requires [application](#) to DBPR to take the following examinations, as chosen by the Board:¹⁴

- North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) developed by the International Council for Veterinary Assessment (ICVA); and
- Laws and rules related to the practice of veterinary medicine.

DBPR is required to license each applicant who the Board certifies has:¹⁵

- Completed the application form and remitted an examination fee set by the Board.¹⁶

² S. [474.202\(11\), F.S.](#)

³ Ss. [474.213](#) & [474.214, F.S.](#)

⁴ S. [474.215\(1\), F.S.](#)

⁵ S. [474.211, F.S.](#)

⁶ See s. [474.202\(13\), F.S.](#) Section [474.202\(1\), F.S.](#), defines “animal” as “any mammal other than a human being or any bird, amphibian, fish, or reptile, wild or domestic, living or dead.”

⁷ See s. [474.202\(9\), F.S.](#) Also included is the determination of the health, fitness, or soundness of an animal, and the performance of any manual procedure for the diagnosis or treatment of pregnancy or fertility or infertility of animals.

⁸ S. [474.202\(8\), F.S.](#)

⁹ S. [474.202\(12\), F.S.](#)

¹⁰ S. [474.213\(1\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

¹¹ See s. [474.207, F.S.](#)

¹² See s. [474.217, F.S.](#)

¹³ See s. [474.2125, F.S.](#)

¹⁴ R. 61G18-11, F.A.C.

¹⁵ S. [474.207\(2\), F.S.](#)

¹⁶ R. 61G18-12, F.A.C.

- Successfully completed the examination or an examination determined by the Board to be equivalent.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of veterinary medicine in Florida in a manner designated by rules of the Board.

Education Requirements

Applicants are required to have obtained the following minimum education requirements:¹⁷

- Graduated from a college of veterinary medicine, either:
 - Accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education; or
 - Listed in the American Veterinary Medical Association Roster of Veterinary Colleges of the World and obtained a certificate from the Education Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates or the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence.

Licensure by Endorsement

DBPR is required to issue a license by endorsement to applicants who pay the required fee and demonstrate the following qualifications to the Board:¹⁸

- **Knowledge of the laws and rules** governing the practice of veterinary medicine in this state; and
- **Holds, and has held for the three years immediately preceding** the application for licensure, a valid, active license to practice veterinary medicine in another state of the United States, the District of Columbia, or a territory of the United States, provided that the applicant has successfully completed a state, regional, national, or other examination that is equivalent to or more stringent than the examination required by the board; **or**
- **Education qualifications** of s. 474.207(2)(b), F.S., and:
 - Successfully completed a state, regional, national, or other examination which is equivalent to or more stringent than the DBPR examination; and
 - Passed the Board's clinical competency examination or another clinical competency examination.

Veterinarian Shortage

Pets

According to a survey conducted by the American Pet Products Association, 70 percent of U.S. households, or about 90.5 million families, own a pet. This is an increase from 56 percent of U.S. households in 1988, and 67 percent in 2019.¹⁹ As a result, experts say there is a shortage of veterinarians in the U.S., which is expected to result in the need for approximately 15,000 veterinarians by the year 2030.²⁰ A study from Banfield Pet Hospital reveals an estimated 75 million pets in the U.S. may not have access to the veterinary care they need by 2030, with an important factor being a critical shortage of veterinarians.²¹

Livestock

¹⁷ S. 474.207(2)(b), F.S.

¹⁸ S. 474.217(1), F.S.

¹⁹ Insurance Information Institute, *Facts + Statistics: Pet Ownership and Insurance*, <https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-pet-ownership-and-insurance#:~:text=Seventy%20percent%20of%20U.S.%20households,and%2067%20percent%20in%202019>. (last visited January 13, 2026).

²⁰ Spectrum News 13, *Mobile 'ElleVet' clinic helps relieve veterinarian shortage*, <https://www.mynews13.com/fl/orlando/news/2023/02/03/the-ellevet-project-#:~:text=E2%80%94Experts%20say%20there's%20a%20shortage,States%20may%20not%20get%20care>. (last visited January 13, 2026).

²¹ Banfield Pet Hospital, *75 million pets may not have access to veterinary care by 2030, New Banfield® study finds*, <https://www.banfield.com/en/about-banfield/newsroom/press-releases/2020/75-million-pets-may-not-have-access-to-veterinary> (last visited January 13, 2026).

According to a study conducted by Johns Hopkins University, the U.S. has lost 90 percent of its large animal and livestock veterinarians since the end of World War II.²² The University of Florida's Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Dana Zimmer, has indicated that there is a shortage of veterinarians in Florida, which in addition to pets has "1.7 million beef cattle and dairy cows, more horses than Kentucky and an alarming decline of manatee." The state's only veterinary medical college, the University of Florida, also reports that due to limited capacity, it must turn away 1,500 qualified candidates a year.²³ According to the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, two factors are largely responsible for the shortage: the cost of obtaining a doctor of veterinary medicine degree and the pay disparity between companion animal veterinarians and large animal veterinarians. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, "the shortage has proven to be an especially salient issue for rural communities across the country and has broad implications for livestock health, economic stability in the agricultural sector, and America's food security."²⁴

OTHER RESOURCES:

[DBPR: Veterinary Medicine Board Information](#)

[USDA: Veterinary Shortage Situations Map](#)

[NCSL: Large Animal Veterinary Shortage](#)

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee	16 Y, 0 N	1/28/2026	Anstead	Thompson
Commerce Committee				

²² Lisa M. Weltzien Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, *THE LIVESTOCK VETERINARIAN SHORTAGE IMPLICATIONS FOR FOOD SAFETY AND SECURITY*, <https://clf.jhsph.edu/sites/default/files/2023-06/the-livestock-veterinarian-shortage.pdf> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

²³ Dana Zimmer, *Florida needs more veterinarians* / *Column*, Tampa Bay Times (January 3, 2022), <https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2022/01/03/florida-needs-more-veterinarians-column/> (last visited January 13, 2026).

²⁴ National Conference of State Legislatures, *Large Animal Veterinary Shortage*, <https://www.ncsl.org/environment-and-natural-resources/large-animal-veterinary-shortage> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).